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ABSTRACT

During January, February, and March 1982, 283 people in 17 cities were interviewed regarding those strategies and policies designed to provide access to employment for disadvantaged youth that should be preserved, changed, or rejected. Participants included program operators and practitioners, program participants, elected and appointed officials, employers, journalists, educators, representatives of community organizations, and "informed observers." Almost 70 percent said funds should go to out-of-school youth. Over 85 percent supported elimination of minimum-wage allowances in classroom programs even if funding is increased. A majority said training programs should be evaluated on the basis of how many participants improved their educational status, were certified as employable, or found unsubsidized employment. There was wide support for a more comprehensive testing and assessment system at program intake. A majority said a more comprehensive long-term approach to training that combines basic education, attitude change, skills development, and on-the-job counseling is required to reduce youth unemployment. Principles for operating effective training programs included strict attendance and competency standards as well as simulation of a work environment, a low supervisor-to-trainee ratio in hands-on training, and private sector involvement in establishing job readiness standards. Most agreed not enough job openings exist. (YLB)

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Jobs for Youth: What We Have Learned

A Report from the Field

CE 033958

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Introduction

This report is based on 283 interviews conducted in 17 cities during January, February and March, 1982. Those interviewed included program operators and practitioners, program participants, elected and appointed officials, employers, private industry council administrators, union representatives, line supervisors in the private sector, educators, representatives of community organizations, Congressional aides, policy analysts and researchers.

The interviews were focused on the question: Which strategies and policies designed to provide access to employment for disadvantaged youth should be preserved, changed or rejected?

The major findings were:

1. Almost 70 percent said that during a period of reduced federal support, funds specifically designated for employment and training should go to disadvantaged out-of-school youths. They said that in-school pre-employment programs should be funded by the Department of Education or by other sources.

2. However, if severely limited training funds continue to be provided to both in-school and out-of-school youths, a majority of respondents said training should be restricted to high school students between *the ages of 16 and 18 and the out-of-school youths between 16 and 19.* In the event of a substantial increase in federal funding, respondents would favor training for disadvantaged in-school and out-of-school youths between the ages of 14 and 21.

3. More than 85 percent of the people interviewed would eliminate minimum wage allowances for classroom training, but would provide supportive services and special grants for those without any source of income or support. However, a majority favored a minimum wage allowance for on-the-job training and work experience programs.

4. A majority said that training programs should be evaluated on the basis of how many participants improved their educational status, were certified as employable or found unsubsidized employment. They said these criteria were preferable to the current standard which emphasizes the number of youths placed in jobs.

5. There was wide support for a *more comprehensive testing and assessment system* at the point of intake into programs. Many of those interviewed also recommended that intake facilities should be situated in disadvantaged communities rather than at one central facility.

6. With reference to training, almost all of the respondents believe that there are not enough training opportunities to meet the needs of growing numbers of disadvantaged youths. Moreover, respondents point out that most training now provided takes the form of short-term interventions. A majority of interviewees say that *what is required to substantially reduce the level of youth unemployment is a more comprehensive long-term approach to training that combines basic education, attitude change, skills development and on-the-job counseling.* This strategy, they believe, provides the greatest payoff

in terms of income gains and improvement in job status. However, a number of respondents also believe that there are certain benefits for younger participants in an approach which places them in entry-level minimum-wage jobs with little or no training. These benefits, they say, include an opportunity to acquire work experience and an immediate source of income.

7. A division of opinion exists over what constitutes job readiness for youth over the age of 16. Line supervisors, personnel officers and participants tended to emphasize the importance of "marketable skills" and "technological literacy," in searching for a job and holding one beyond the tryout period. However, company executives and program operators stressed basic education in reading and computation and attitude change with regard to behavior in the workplace.

8. Several principles were cited repeatedly for operating effective training programs. These included *strict standards for attendance and achieving competencies; the simulation of a work environment; a low supervisor-to-trainee ratio in hands-on training and the involvement of the private sector in establishing standards for job readiness.*

9. With reference to job development, most people interviewed in the training system and in the private sector said that more intensive efforts should be made to develop jobs where youths could acquire additional skills and have an opportunity to upgrade their job status. They acknowledged that this is difficult because there *are not enough job openings to meet the needs of disadvantaged youths.* However, they said the training system needed to more fully involve representatives of the private sector in planning programs and in job development strategies. They said that with greater involvement of private sector representatives the prospects for securing employment for youths may be improved. Respondents also favored a federally-subsidized eight-to-twelve week tryout period. They recommended that a job counselor be provided to serve as an intermediary between newly hired youth and employers during the tryout period.

10. With reference to future training and employment efforts, a majority of respondents favor a new federal policy which would require employers who receive tax incentives and other public subsidies to give a higher priority to hiring graduates of training programs and that job development strategies should be linked to public development projects.

I. BACKGROUND

Ten years ago, David Rusk, the former mayor of Albuquerque, established the first prime sponsor system in the United States to administer a local employment and training program. For Rusk, the overriding objective of the program was to provide participants with "access" to the job market. "It was the objective then," Rusk says, "and it's still the objective to get people close enough to a job so they can decide whether they want the mainstream or something else."

A substantial, if not sufficient, effort has been made since the early 1960's to provide access to the job market for millions of disadvantaged youth.

The effort to train and employ youth began with a relatively modest initiative involving a few hundred thousand youth across the country. By 1979 there were more than 2.5 million youngsters participating in CETA programs, according to the National Longitudinal Survey. This represented 6.9 percent of all youth in the United States.[1] Robert Taggart, former administrator of the Federal Office of Youth Programs, says that in the summer of 1979, 45 percent of all minority teenagers were enrolled in a CETA program. Public sector training and employment accounted for 14 percent of all jobs held by 16 to 19-year-old black youths, Taggart says.[2]

With the enactment of the Youth Employment and Demonstrations Project Act (YEDPA) in 1977, four major new programs were established as well as 80 demonstration projects. The Labor Department, according to Taggart, funded the 37 largest random assignment social experiments conducted in the country, costing more than $280 million a year.[3]

In January 1982 the national training and employment effort had reached a critical juncture. Everywhere the effort was being sharply reduced. An estimated 250,000 fewer minority youngsters will take part in programs in 1982.[4] In New York, for example, the number of kids in the summer youth employment program dropped from 62,000 in 1978 to 41,000 in 1982.[5] Most of the demonstration and experimental projects have been closed down. Public service employment, the major source of jobs for minority youngsters, has been ruled out, except where it can be disguised under other program titles. Across the country, the professional staffs serving youth — basic education teachers, skill instructors, job developers, counselors, program planners — are being cut. The basic infrastructure developed over 20 years — community-based intake centers and outreach efforts, skill center, auxiliary and alternative schools — are being stripped to the bone. Even agencies, such as the Employment Service, which do not serve youth primarily, are being cut back. All this at a time when the unemployment rate for minority youth has risen to 45 percent.

Even while support is diminished, the core substance of the youth initiative, its philosophy and thrust, is in transition. National policy has shifted toward the private sector as the primary employer of youth. Allowances and stipends — what economist Eli Ginzberg describes as the "income-transfer centrality" of youth programs — may be eliminated. Long-term intervention, the so-called "second tier" of training — often discussed but rarely implemented — isn't even discussed very much anymore because of the lack of funds for even short-term programs.

These substantive changes, the inconclusive results of a variety of past youth programs and the reduction of funding for all social initiatives has forced practitioners and participants to confront difficult policy issues. A discussion of these issues follows in later sections of this paper. At this point, however, it may be useful to describe the methodology which was used to prepare this report.

II. METHODOLOGY

During the first three months of 1982 the current literature pertaining to youth training and employment was reviewed. The literature included published and unpublished reports, some of which are listed in the footnotes at the back of this paper. After that, 283 people were interviewed in 17 cities. The interviewees can be separated into the following categories:

- *Fifty-seven participants and former participants in youth training and employment programs.* Forty-two of the fifty-seven participants, when they were in training, had met the federal income eligibility requirements in CETA training programs.

- *One hundred and five practitioners in federally funded training programs.* These included local manpower directors, program operators, training instructors, counselors, planners and private industry council administrators.

- *Forty-two representatives of private industry and organized labor.* These included representatives of large business organizations, among them the Sears Corporation, the Kaiser Corporation, the Central Data Corporation, Quaker Oats, the United Parcel Service, public utilities in several cities, banks in Boston, Miami, and Albuquerque, the Motorola Corporation and Procter and Gamble. In addition, employers at smaller manufacturing and industrial shops, fast food restaurants, retail shops and supermarkets were interviewed. Representatives of trade and manufacturing associations and unions including the National Alliance of Business, the Chamber of Commerce and the AFL-CIO Human Resources Development Institute were also interviewed.

- *Seven journalists who had covered youth training and employment efforts as part of their beat.*

- *Twenty-two educators, including teachers, school administrators, members of boards of education, school counselors, educational consultants and learning specialists.*

• *Thirty-one representatives of community-based organizations.* Among these organizations were: The Door in New York; the Coalition for Progress in Miami; Asian Neighborhood Design and Youth for Service in San Francisco; Youth Works in Oakland; Head Rest in Modesto, California and the YMCA and the Alternative School Network in Chicago.

• *Eighteen "informed observers."* In this category present and former federal officials, Congressional aides, present and former elected officials, researchers, academics and policy analysts were interviewed.

The interviews were conducted in the following cities: New York, Albuquerque, Miami, Fort Lauderdale, Waltham, Mass., Boston, Washington D.C., Baltimore, Philadelphia, Chicago, Minneapolis, St. Paul, San Francisco, Oakland, Modesto, California, Phoenix and Denver.

This is not a social science research project nor is it a public opinion survey. It is a journalistic report from the field. It is a journalist's account of the priorities in youth training and employment efforts, based on views expressed in the field. The charge contained in the original memorandum concerned with this assignment, was: "To identify for federal policymakers and those who influence policy the most important lessons learned from years of experience about what works best in linking disadvantaged urban youth with productive employment."

The assignment was refined in discussions with officers from five foundations which supported this project. They all emphasized that the report was to focus on *strategies and approaches* that have been effective or may be effective in the future to reduce the level of youth unemployment. In view of the vast range of programs in the United States and the distinct effects of local conditions on these programs, discussion of specific programs was discouraged.

All interviewees would be asked the same questions: What strategies and approaches have been effective in the past? What have we learned from the national investment in youth training and employment? What was lacking in past efforts to resolve this problem? What new initiatives need to be introduced? What was working and who was working? Which strategies were moving youth closer to the goal of access to the job market? Which policies needed to be changed and which should be rejected based on the experience of the last 20 years? All of these questions were posed against the background of the present reduction of funding and the likelihood that there would be no significant increase in support in the near future.

The major themes and issues that emerged from the interviews were: Should funding be directed toward in-school or out-of-school youths? Should allowances be paid for classroom training? What criteria should be used to evaluate training programs? What kind of jobs should youth be trained for? What skills are required to find work? What are the key principles for operating effective programs? What has been the response of the private sector to youth unemployment? What elements must be present for testing and assessing youths who seek to enter training programs? The views of respondents regarding these and other major issues are described in the following sections of this report.

III. YOUTH AND MONEY

Should employment and training funds be spent on youth in school or on youngsters out of school or on both?

No one was comfortable with this question. Most argued that youth in and out of school needed assistance to prepare for work. In fact, some maintained that youngsters whose family incomes exceeded the CETA guidelines often needed help as much as poorer kids. ***But if pressed hard, almost 70 percent said that funds specifically designated for employment and training should go to out-of-school youth during this period of retrenchment.***

Perhaps, most surprising, was that nearly half of the teachers, counselors and school administrators subscribed to this view. It came down, finally, to the question of need. The response of a vocational counselor in a work experience program at a Liberty City high school in Miami was fairly typical: "If you forced me to answer, I'd have to say the kid on the street is going down the tubes, going down fast, and if you're talking about degrees of desperation, desperation not need, he is the most desperate."

There is a widespread belief that many in-school programs are slanted toward youth with the best chance of making a successful transition to the private sector. A jobs development specialist at a Scottsdale, Arizona high school, which is participating in the Jobs for Arizona Graduates program, asks, "If you're trying to find some jobs in a bank or in the Motorola company, would you send out a kid whose father is an alcoholic, who's been picked up for drug abuse, who's been truant half the time? No, the school is going to send out a kid with the best chance of sticking on the job, the kid who's going to make the school look good."

This seems to be the case with the Jobs for Arizona Graduates program in the Phoenix-Scottsdale schools. Of the 23 high school seniors interviewed there, 19 were planning to go on to college after they graduate and 17 said they had planned to continue their education before they ever entered the program. Some of these 23 youths come from troubled backgrounds, are confused about their vocational direction and would probably have some difficulty finding work without the program, but they are clearly not the most in need.

Some school systems which received federal training funds were criticized for operating on a double standard that did not serve the interests of the students most in peril of dropping out. Eunice Elton, the veteran manpower director in San Francisco, says, "School counselors put the poorer kids into public sector jobs. When you got through with it, the poor kids in the federally funded school programs were working in community-based, non-profit agencies or in the school district or in government agencies. None of these agencies were going to hire them. The middle-class kids were placed with the law firm downtown or with Standard Oil. There's a kind of segregation, but a segregation just the same."

But in the past at least there were public sector jobs. Now most have been eliminated; at the same time many schools pursue a policy of "untargeted" programs which do not require students to meet income eligibility standards. In a statewide effort, the Colorado Alliance of Business, working with the Employment Service and the schools, placed more than 11,000 high school students in part-time and summer jobs in 1981.[6] In this program, middle-class white kids competed with low-income Hispanic and black youngsters for a dwindling number of minimum-wage jobs. High school students who want to enter the Youth Work program in Oakland must be able to read and compute at an eighth grade level; they must also be able to compose a business letter. "If you're looking for a secretarial job," says program director Joan Dark, "you have to read and write first." While the program does have a high job placement rate and may succeed in persuading many participants to go on to college, it cannot claim to serve the students most likely to drop out.

When Congress included in its employment and training legislation a provision that 22 percent of all manpower funds must go to local school systems, which chose to participate in training, it had one objective in mind: to build closer cooperation and collaboration between the schools, the employment and training system and the private sector. A majority of those interviewed do not believe this goal has been achieved. And, they say, it is this failure that argues most persuasively against using scarce manpower funds for school programs.

"We were hoping that the 22 percent 'set-aside' would create systemic change in the schools," says New York City Commissioner of Employment, Ronald Gault. "But it wasn't realized. We never saw it across the system."

A 1981 study by Herbert Bienstock, former regional commissioner of labor statistics, found that in New York City an estimated 250,000 young people between 16 and 24 were "out of school, out of work and looking for work."

"When we're talking about these kinds of numbers," Gault says, "I don't think we have any choice but to focus our extremely limited funds on out-of-school youth, to allow them to become financially self-reliant."

Like most of the others interviewed for this study, Gault believes that efforts must be sustained to link schools and the work world, to provide work experience and part-time jobs to potential dropouts, to improve vocational education. Most practitioners are aware that Labor Department studies show modest gains in income and employment from job readiness, career development and job search assistance programs. They also note that in many school programs, vocational education had been upgraded. ***Nevertheless, practitioners argue that funding for the schools should come from the Department of Education and other sources, but not from limited employment and training monies.***

An important exception is alternative schools and, in some communities, the junior college system. Some educators and program operators say that these schools have been effective in providing remedial education and basic skill instruction. Joseph Duggan, balance-of-state CETA director in Massachusetts, and former manpower director in Boston, says:

"I'm all for changing the school system. God, how could I live in Boston and not feel that way? But I think *educational* funds ought to be used to accomplish that. I think employment and training funds ought to be used to reach out to

dropouts. Here, I'm talking about your alternative schools. We know that many of them work. We know that they're concerned about preparing kids to be employed. That's an effective and purposeful use of these funds."

At what age should youth be trained?

For many people this question presented as difficult a choice as whether to serve youngsters in school or out of school. Few argued with the proposition that an introduction to the world of work and vocational guidance should be provided to youngsters at an early age; a majority felt that, if funds were available, this should occur in junior high school or even in elementary school. "The younger you can reach them the better chance you have of keeping them in school and preparing them to work," was an observation repeated many times. At the other end of the scale, some sources argued that limiting training to youths under 21 was an arbitrary decision that did not reflect the realities of the job market. "We find that young men and women between 21 and 24 are treated like kids when they go for a job," says Commissioner Gault. "They don't have any more access or credentials when they're 22 or 23."

More than three-quarters of the trainers, employers, educators and youth felt that *if additional resources were provided national policy should mandate pre-employment training for youth between 14 and 21. If severely limited funds continue to be provided to both in-school and out-of-school youths, they reluctantly agreed that most resources should be concentrated on high school students between the age of 16 and 18 and on out-of-school youth between 16 and 19.*

They made the case for these age groups on practical grounds. Older youth, they said, were more responsive to intensive job-related skill training, and were more likely to get a job once they had gone through training. They also noted that in many states youths have to be 18 to operate power machinery. In California and Arizona, for example, trainees often had to wait a year or more to be eligible for the jobs for which they were trained. "In the year they wait, they tend to lose their skills," a job specialist in the Jobs for Arizona Graduates program said. "They wander around, pick up any job they can and wind up more discouraged than when they entered the program. It doesn't make sense to teach a kid a skill unless he or she is 17."

For dropouts, a comprehensive training effort seems to be most effective with the 16-to-19 age group, a majority of respondents said. They felt that younger kids were most interested in part-time or pickup jobs that provided a little extra cash, but older youth were feeling the pressure to commit themselves to an occupation. Moreover, many older youths had left home and had to support themselves.

Should participants receive allowances for classroom training?

There is little support for paying minimum-wage stipends to youth in training, except for those participating in on-the-job training. *More than 85 percent of the people interviewed in this study supported elimination of minimum-*

wage allowances in classroom programs even if funding is increased. (However, almost all believe there should be extensive supportive services and provisions for loans and grants for those most in need.) It is striking that 45 of the 57* participants and graduates of training programs felt the same way. Significantly, 26 out of 32 youngsters now receiving stipends said they would continue in their training, even if there were no minimum-wage allowance.

The criticism of the minimum-wage allowance comes from two perspectives. Program operators and staff believe that the cost of paying participants consumes a disproportionate amount of training funds, weakening the quality of instruction, reducing the number of participants, limiting job placement efforts and precluding vital post-program counseling and support. The result was that in Denver, the CETA program in 1981 paid $1.5 million in minimum-wage allowances out of a total training budget of $4 million.* "Keeping the allowances meant we just couldn't train the number of people we wanted to train," says CETA Director Jeffrey Wein.

So the Denver program has discontinued payment of allowances and shifted to what Wein calls an "alternative" system in which participants receive fairly extensive supportive services. These include food vouchers, small loans, child care, transportation to the training site and lunch money. Participants with no source of income can apply for a cash subsistence grant through counselors in the CETA system. The program is providing on the average six grants a week. Wein says that, even without allowances, twice as many youths will be trained this year as were trained last year.

Perhaps the harshest criticism of allowance payments, as a national policy, comes from Joel Seiler, director of occupational testing for the U.S. Employment Service, and one of those who helped design the Carter Administration youth employment effort. Seiler has monitored the effects of the allowance policy since its inception in the mid-1960s.

"The income maintenance transfer portion of training kept rising because the minimum wage kept rising," Seiler says. "Meanwhile, the cost of training — personnel, facilities, equipment — went up, too. It got to the point where there was no wherewithal for training. It was all income maintenance. You had people trying to figure out, 'How do I deal with a group of kids and yet spend no money, because they're getting all the money?' "

By the mid-1970s, he says, the results of the allowance policy had become evident. "The program operators got some private employer to donate garbage equipment. They got an instructor who couldn't get a job as a gas station attendant. There was no money, so there was relatively no discipline, supervision and training."

That's the outlook from Washington. But there's another perspective, the viewpoint of the young person in the program. A 19-year-old black youth in Miami reflects on his experience during the last four years. "Four years, four programs," he says. "After the first one, I said the program's just a way of sittin' around, like in school, but gettin' paid for it. 'Cause nobody cares what you

*Forty-two of the 57 participants met federal income eligibility requirements while they were in training.

learned. The programs just fill you with hope, but nothin' happens. If they really did somethin', I'd give up the money they pay you, try to get a part-time job or loan. It'd be worth it."

While the majority believe that the payment of allowances has impaired training efforts, there is also deep concern that their elimination may deter those youth with the least resources and the greatest need for training. This concern is most strongly expressed by community-based multi-service organizations that have tried to serve this segment of the youth population. Michael Herron, director for the past five years of Head Rest, a community-based youth agency in Modesto, California, says, "I just don't think the youth who come through our doors — kids who've run away, who're living in rooming houses or shelters, kids who've been in trouble with the law, drug abusers, teenage prostitutes — will stay if we can't pay them the minimum wage for training. They need the money to live and they'll find it on the street if they can't find it here. Take away the stipends, and you're going to screen out a fair part of the population."

Most program operators share Herron's fears. But they hope that a combination of supportive services, loans, incentive payments, non-monetary rewards and the promise of something better than a "jive" job will draw youth into programs. They hope, but no one can be sure after 17 years of minimum wage allowances.

What standards should be used for evaluating a program? What constitutes success?

Here, practice and theory clash. The theory is that training efforts should be judged on the basis of whether they meet the needs of the particular groups of youths they serve. This means that no single uniform standard should be applied to diverse strategies: Youngsters who have job experience, read at a 10th-grade level and come from relatively stable families may require comparatively short-term training. Other young people, who read at a third-grade level, who left home when they were 12, who have used heroin, may require much more extensive intervention, involving remediation, counseling and multi-level training and, with all of that, they may not be able to get much more than a menial job.

These distinctions should be considered when programs are evaluated, but often they are forgotten, according to many of the interviewees. They say that the rewards go to programs which move participants through training in the greatest number, as rapidly as possible, and place them in jobs, any jobs. Programs which try to provide a wide spectrum of pre-employment preparation, such as basic academic skills, attitude change, occupational and vocational skills, soon find that their funding has dried up.

Bobbie A. Jones, associate director of CETA in Albuquerque, says, "Let me tell you what's so fictitious about the whole damn thing. If we were serving the hard-core unemployed we could never serve the number they [the federal government] want. That hard-core group would need every damn resource

we've got, so you would never get up to the numbers.

"If I was serving the hard-core, I'd need a large class of ESL [English as a Second Language] or a large class of academic preparation. In the first year almost 90 percent of my resources would be there. In the second year I phase down on that, move on to skills and when you get to the tail end you have all your resources on job placement. And that's the beginning. After they get the job you give them support and every damn thing they need out there. So you wouldn't be looking for a payoff in less than three years, possibly four years. That's what you would be doing if you were honest about training. But that's not what we're doing. A 19, 20-year-old with some skills and work experience, we brush him up and send him out to a job. The others? We don't have the money for the others."

There is broad agreement that programs must be judged by the competencies youngsters achieve as well as by the jobs they get. The National Youth Practitioners Network, after holding conferences with more than 200 practitioners, recommends that three short-term standards should be applied to youth programs: (1) the percentage of youth entering unsubsidized employment; (2) the percentage improving their educational status; and (3) the percentage certified as employable by the local private industry council or another community planning body. Longer-term benchmarks would include progress in wages and weeks worked and enrollment in schools or in vocational training programs.[8A]

Albert Dotson, a vice president of the Sears Company in Miami, who has been active in planning youth programs, says, "We have to understand that there may not be jobs for young people in this economy, but there *may* be jobs later if they have skills. It's totally unrealistic to believe we can move every kid from Z to A. Some kids we can move from Z to H. Others we can move from H to C. We have to begin with the kid. Then we have to think what's the basic level of skills and development that will make him employable eventually. Just saying we've got the kid a job doesn't begin to deal with the problem."

A training strategy tailored to the distinct needs and abilities of participants seems like a sensible idea. But this presupposes that people who plan and implement training strategies know whom it is they're training. Many educators and trainers conceded that this is often not the case. Pat Larkins, the head of an association of black contractors in Fort Lauderdale and a member of the Broward County Private Industry Council, says, "After 20 years of messing around with manpower programs I'm convinced that maybe five percent of the people who work in these programs know who these kids really are, what they want, what they need. And, sure as hell, the kids they know least about are the ones standing on the corner."

Typically, in most cities, out-of-school youngsters apply for a training program at a single central intake office or at a testing and placement center. There a clerk asks them to fill out several forms on which they list their age, their family income and the years of school they have completed. The applicant may be asked to take reading and computation tests or someone may check with the school system to determine the youngster's reading level. Rarely does the intake clerk explain to the kid why these questions are being asked. If the

kid isn't frightened away by the bureaucratic process, he will be told that someone will get in touch with him if he is accepted into the training program.

For one segment of the youth population, the information elicited at the intake centers is sufficient to place them in a program that will meet their needs. Boston University economist Paul Osterman says this group is composed of youngsters in school or those who have recently dropped out. "For many of these kids, it's an income problem," says Professor Osterman. "Their families are poor and they need a job to bring in a few dollars."

There are other kids who have been out of school for some time. Most of them are in their late teens or early twenties. Dr. Osterman believes that a substantial number of these youths can be trained in less than six months to take a job that requires some vocational skills and involves a certain degree of responsibility. It is not too difficult to match them to the appropriate training.

After that, it gets more complicated. Then, says Professor Osterman, "you come to kids whose life experience or educational backgrounds are just damaging to them. They're just not equipped to work. In that group there are two subcategories: People who are psychologically stable, but they can't read, write and do arithmetic. And then there are people who are just blown away."

Many of these kids are the ones Pat Larkins finds "standing around on the corner." Lorraine Mai, director of The Door, a multi-service youth agency in New York, says that for most program operators "these kids are a mystery. They don't know them and they don't understand their lives. There's no single training strategy that's going to meet their needs. The information that kids put on their intake forms is the tip of the iceberg."

Before a training strategy can be devised to respond to youths who have suffered severe psychological damage, program operators must find out what the youngsters' problems are. A number of educators and manpower practitioners believe that current testing and program placement procedures should be revised to include a more comprehensive "deprivation index," similar to that proposed by Peter Townsend, professor of social policy at the University of Bristol in England. This testing instrument would consider damaging life experiences as well as economic status in assessing a youngster's need for training.

Educators and learning specialists are aware that implementing a more comprehensive assessment system would add substantial costs to the employment and training effort. But they believe that it is an essential prerequisite to improving the training effort and urge that such a system be established in some pilot sites to test its effectiveness. In the sites where more comprehensive assessment has been attempted, it has yielded significant findings.

Educational consultant Brenda Shapiro found last year when she organized two pilot intake centers in the inner city of Miami that more than half of the youngsters suffered from hearing and visual problems *previously undiagnosed.* Colorado State University which also operated comprehensive assessment centers for youth in the summer of 1981 in Denver also reported that 67 percent of high school dropouts had physical impediments as well as learning-related disabilities which had not been detected previously in the school system.[9]

Dr. Judith Amster, a remedial learning and testing specialist at the University of Miami, voices a widespread concern when she observes, "Most training

programs don't detect these problems. They dump kids into programs and, you know, you can always spot these kids. They are the ones that sit in the back of the room with their feet up on the desk and their hats pulled down over their heads."

In addition to supporting a more comprehensive and sensitive assessment and testing system, trainers and educators believe: (1) intake and testing centers should be situated in inner-city neighborhoods where minority youth have ready access to them; (2) neighborhood intake centers should be staffed with experienced youth workers from community-based organizations and social agencies who would be assisted by learning specialists and youngsters who have successfully completed training.

IV. YOUTH AND SKILLS

In this moment of reflection, both youths and people concerned with training and jobs are rethinking the question of what skills should be taught to provide access to the private sector. They are re-evaluating the effectiveness of a variety of different approaches: programs that stress rapid job placement; programs that develop craft and technical skills; programs that involve the private sector and unions in training; programs that blend training and community improvement strategies; and programs that attempt to simulate the working environment found in private industry. What follows is a discussion of some of the core questions raised by these approaches.

What's the value of "no-skill" training for "no-skill" jobs?

Economist Eli Ginzberg defines "patch" jobs as minimum-wage, entry-level labor, requiring few if any skills. Most of these jobs do not provide much opportunity to advance within the work organization or credentials for taking a better job with another employer. The vast preponderance of jobs offered minority in-school students and high school dropouts are "patch" jobs.

Whatever the program title — Jobs for America Graduates, Success on the Move, 70001, Summer Youth Employment, or Jobs for Youth — a common theme runs through all of these efforts: They direct youngsters toward "patch" jobs.

The leading proponents of this strategy are Jobs for Youth (JFY) and 70001. Studies of these organizations identify both the advantages and drawbacks to this approach to employing youth. A recent evaluation by the intermediary, Public/Private Ventures (P/PV), finds that participants in these programs are more likely to be working than non-participants, 39 percent compared to 19 percent. Participants earn more: $4.31 an hour compared to $3.41. Their weekly wage is $22 more.[10]

These findings are particularly impressive when you consider who participates. Frederick Jungmann, executive director of Jobs for Youth in Boston, says that in the program's three sites, Boston, Chicago and New York, between 75 to 90 percent of the youth are black or Latino. All are below the poverty level, an estimated 80 percent have had contact with the criminal justice system, and the majority, Jungmann says, read below a sixth-grade level.

Most of the businesses employing youth from these programs are small: retail outlets, manufacturing and industrial shops; mom-and-pop groceries, fast food restaurants, supermarkets. These employers benefit because they don't have to pay an employment agency, because they have lots of employee turnover, because the participants in JFY and 70001 are screened in advance. If one kid doesn't work out, there's always another one standing behind him. Jungmann says that the program which served 3,000 youths in Boston during a five-month period could easily be doubled if funds were available. "We have two and a half jobs available everytime we try to place a youngster," he says.

The JFY strategy is to get youths into a job as quickly as possible. The P/PV study found that JFY youth received on the average 17 hours of basic education or counseling; in 70001 they had 57 hours of services.[11] Except for a few pilot efforts, there is no skills development. "The willingness to work, the desire to work, and the rudimentary ability to work—that's the focus here," says Patricia Nooey, director of the New York JFY. "We believe that youth learn while they're working."

In summary, the JFY staff says its strategy has several important advantages. It finds jobs quickly for youths who need them badly. It puts money into their pockets when they are desperately short of the money they need to survive. And for youths who have not worked at similar jobs, any employment, even if in secondary labor markets, may provide a learning experience. They may learn to show up on time, perform work in an acceptable fashion, take orders from their supervisors and develop a pattern of cooperation with fellow workers.

However, a majority of practitioners and youths interviewed expressed two major reservations. One concern was what was perceived as a lack of supportive services and follow up after youths were placed in jobs. The other reservation had to do with the jobs themselves.

Richard de Lone, president of P/PV, says that a 14-month study of JFY is likely to show a decay in earnings over time, by perhaps as much as 50 percent.[12] This, he says, may reflect a lack of continuing support after a youth is employed. However, de Lone points out that the decline in earnings is less in 70001, where there is greater emphasis on basic education, attaining an equivalency diploma and participating in local service programs. Approximately one-third of the participants are active in the 70001 Career Association, which provides a continuing link with the program. By comparison, de Lone says, most JFY youth lose contact with the organization after six months.

But the biggest drawback to this strategy may be in the kinds of jobs youths are offered in these programs. Eunice Elton, the CETA director in San Francisco, says that youth in that city are *never* placed in fast-food restaurants and similar workplaces. "The pay is lousy. The work conditions are just this side of slavery," she says. Ira M. Weingarten, director of program development for the

Chicago Alliance of Business, calls such jobs "garbage." What occurs is indefensible exploitation. From a training standpoint, the gains that are made in fast food places are either made or not made in three weeks time. Nothing happens, except negative experiences, after that."

Dr. Ralph L. Mosher, a developmental psychologist at Boston University, evaluated what he rated as a successful summer jobs program, conducted in 1980 by the Chicago Alliance of Business. What made this effort successful, Dr. Mosher found, was that most employers in the program were interested in helping the youths learn from their work experience. "Most of the work settings permitted the CETA interns to undertake progressively more complex tasks and competencies and supported them in so doing," he said. "In such settings the trainees were most likely to learn how to succeed and to feel good about themselves as workers. Similarly, from taking on more complex jobs and succeeding at them a sense of commitment to work was most likely to come."[15]

The majority of practitioners felt that the "patch" job strategy should be supported but only if certain conditions are met. Most of the 42 employers, chief executive officers, line supervisors, personnel officers and union officials interviewed recommended that greater emphasis be placed on skills development and educational achievement. They believe that on-the-job counseling and support are vital.

"The kid has got to understand what's happening to him on the job," one personnel director said. Business people said that greater efforts should be made to find more promising jobs and where employers do not provide the opportunity for advancement, youngsters should receive support when they try to find a better job. Employers also suggest that program directors try to involve line supervisors in an assessment of work performance and the youths' progress on the job. "No matter how small the employer they've got to believe that they have a stake in the kids' future," the proprietor of a picture frame company in Albuquerque said. Finally, employers believe that program staff should try to negotiate with trade associations and other groups of employers to provide more advanced training and new job opportunities. "The only time a fast food job is justifiable," said one restaurant owner, "is when a McDonalds or a Burger King agrees to promote a percentage of these kids to headquarters jobs. Otherwise it's a zero."

What kind of skills are necessary to get a job?

"Send me a kid who can read and write and add a little and who has the right attitude. The company will train him. We'll do the rest." — William G. "Bing" Grady, President, Albuquerque National Bank.

"I was in this program for six weeks. They improved my reading score and arithmetic. They told me how to do a resume, how to dress for an interview, how to fill out the application. Then I went out to the unemployment building. They sent me out to 10 jobs, maybe. Everytime the employer said, I'll give you a call. The last time I asked the employer, Why don't you hire me? The guy said, 'Son, you need a skill'. That's how I got to this skill center." — Charles Cumberland, 19, a participant in a carpentry skill program in Miami.

"The white kid, he comes into a company, maybe it's enough he's graduated from high school and he has self-esteem. The black kid, to get past the door, needs something more. He needs a marketable skill. That's his one equalizer." — Michael Marker, personnel specialist, Procter & Gamble, Modesto, California.

These differing views reflect a sharp conflict that divides the employment and training community. Almost all of the young people interviewed — in training and employed — believed they needed a marketable skill to get anything more than a "patch" job. They had learned this from talking to other kids, from talking to their parents, from their own experience as they searched for a job.

PIC members, company officers and executives, and many program operators argued that raising the educational level, teaching youths how to look for a job and cultivating the work ethic and the proper work attitude were the essential ingredients in making a disadvantaged kid competitive in the job market. "What the private sector wants is a kid with the right attitude who can read and write. They'll do the training." This statement was repeated again and again across the country.

But that wasn't what personnel staff people and line supervisors said. With few exceptions, they said: Yes, attitude was important; yes, literacy was essential; ***but*** minority youth needed training to get jobs ***and*** to keep them. They divide youth into two groups: 15 to 18 years of age and those between 18 and 21. Youth under 18, seeking part or full-time jobs, require what Thomas Varley of Control Data Corporation in Minneapolis terms "technological literacy."

Varley, general manager of the academic division of Control Data, has conducted a number of national studies of employer requirements. He defines "basic technological literacy" this way: "If they're going into an entry-level job in a bank they have to understand the words used, they need experience in counting money, they've got to know something about using a machine. They may not need finished expertise, but they must have the edge that technological literacy gives them."

But line supervisors and personnel officers say those over 18 need more specific knowledge of the systems and machinery in the workplace. They need to be able to function effectively from the start. Kenneth DeBey, Denver area representative of the AFL-CIO's Human Resources Development Institute, says, "If a black or Hispanic kid's going to work cutting meat, he has to know how to cut meat. If it's operating a lathe, you have to know how to work a lathe. If it's typing, you can't start typing 30, 40 words. You need 60, 70 words just to get a shot. What I'm saying is the kid doesn't have to be super-great. But he has to be competent. And he has to carry with him a piece of paper, a certificate, that testifies to the fact that he's competent."

Both technological literacy and intensive training have been eliminated or sharply reduced in many programs because of the cut backs in funds. Another reason is that program operators cannot get even tentative commitments of jobs from the private sector when a program is being planned. It's difficult to decide what kinds of jobs youths should be trained for when the jobs are uncertain. The history of the youth effort is riddled with examples of programs

which trained participants for jobs that either didn't exist or were not open to them.

Perhaps the most important reason why youth and foremen and supervisors emphasize pragmatic job-related training is because they understand that race is a real obstacle to getting and holding a job. The white youth who has a high school diploma, a couple of years of college or an uncle in the union may be permitted a few mistakes with the machinery and technology. But, says Michael Marker of Procter and Gamble, with a minority kid there aren't many second chances. "His access to the job is in the first few weeks," Marker says. "If he screws up, if he shows uncertainty or unfamiliarity with the work, the stereotype of the black failure is reinforced, for the kid and the supervisor and the other workers. Everybody draws back from him — 'Who is this honey personnel sent to us? What are we gonna do to get rid of this burden?' Very quickly you find the kid isolated on the job. His access is shut off."

Research commissioned by the Office of Youth Programs (OYP) documents the payoffs from intensive job-related training. OYP found that classroom training raises earnings by 10 percent in the year after termination from a program, while on-the-job training generated 18 percent gains. The longer the training the greater the gains. Trainees who spend more than 40 weeks in classroom training earn six times more than trainees who participate from 11 to 20 weeks. Robert Taggart, former OYP administrator, reports that the three in 10 Job Corps enrollees who complete vocational training account for six-sevenths of earning gains achieved by males and three-fifths of those achieved by females.[14]

The payoffs to society in reduced crime and welfare dependency are also substantial. Every dollar spent on Job Corps returns $1.30 in social benefits, says Taggart; the return from OJT is $2.18 and for local classroom training it is $1.14.[15] Yet, as Taggart emphasizes, whatever training is available serves only a small number of those who need it and is usually of short duration:

- A third of classroom trainees received more than half a year of instruction and only two percent of all terminees received more than a year's training.
- Opportunities to join the Job Corps are available for only one in 20 CETA youth participants.
- OJT is available for less than one in 10 youths outside of summer programs.[16]

"Training is available for only a small proportion of the universe of need," Taggart concludes.

The stream of statistics from the federal government leads to only one conclusion: work-related training is a critical make-or-break factor in providing youths with access to the job market. The training may occur in a classroom or on the job or as a combination of both. It may be coupled with academic or remedial education. It may be directed toward a specific skill or craft. Or it may provide a degree of technological literacy that permits the disadvantaged urban youth an opportunity to survive a break-in period on the job. But the vast majority of the respondents agreed that training enables many youths to experience their first real success, in the work place. In contradistinction, a strategy that emphasizes job placement without training, according to many, makes success and continued advancement at work more elusive.

What makes a good program?

Three years ago, program operators would have responded to this question by asking another question: Do you mean public service jobs or private sector jobs?

A majority of the program operators and practitioners interviewed believe that public service employment served a number of useful purposes. It provided jobs, they say, for youths who might not otherwise have been able to find work. It often bought time for young men and women until they were ready to move into the business world. It also provided on-the-job training that prepared some youths to enter the private sector. In fact, when pressed, a majority of business people interviewed for this report, said that PSE was an essential alternative source of jobs for the most troubled youths who could not function effectively in the private sector.

Yet both a majority of practitioners and employers agreed that PSE has little political support at this time. The journalists interviewed said that the abuses and mismanagement attributed to public service employment had turned the public against it. "You could run the best PSE program in the world and produce the statistics to prove it, and my newspaper would still run an editorial saying it was a waste of taxpayers' money," a Miami reporter said.

A majority of all the groups of respondents believes that sometime in the future a new national PSE program for youth and adults will emerge, better managed, providing needed community services, alert to abuses and the possibility of corruption. But for the moment, the vast majority of the training and employment community must, for lack of an alternative, direct its attention toward private sector employment where the profit motive overrides social concerns and standards are tougher than they were in many public service jobs.

In their efforts to tailor programs to the private sector, planners and operators have developed a set of principles and strategies which most of those interviewed agree are present in effective programs.

- Many program operators believe strict standards for attendance and participation must be established from the start and implemented throughout training. Ira Weingarten, who directed the Chicago Alliance of Business training program, says, "There was one rule. Here's this door. If you don't go through the door on time, it's closed." Although programs often claim that they have a five percent limit on absences and lateness, many of the participants said their programs suffered because as many as 30 percent of the kids were absent, paid little attention to instruction, sold drugs during the lunch hours and at the end of the day, and physically threatened other trainees.

- Secondly, strict standards must be set for achieving competencies and completing work projects during training. These standards should be defined by representatives of the private sector in cooperation with the program staff. Exemplary training programs such as Training Inc. in Chicago and Asian Neighborhood Design in San Francisco have insisted on maintaining these standards.

- Third, effective programs try to simulate the actual working environment. Training Inc., is a secretarial skills program which operates in three sites in

Chicago and Indianapolis. The sites are housed in office buildings. Participants dress and behave as they would at work. They eat lunch in cafeterias frequented by employees of firms in the buildings. Instructors have worked recently in the private sector and consult frequently with supervisors in companies that may hire graduates of the programs. Representatives of personnel departments conduct mock job interviews with trainees. A graduation luncheon for participants is heavily attended by representatives of major Chicago firms.

In the six years since its inception, Training Inc., which is directed by the Central YMCA of Chicago, has graduated more than 2,000 trainees. The program claims an 85 percent retention rate during training and a 90 percent placement rate. The program costs $2,000 for each participant during a 14-week training cycle.[17]

Gilbert Chan, director of Asian Neighborhood Design (AND), also believes that recreating the actual work environment is the primary reason for the program's success. This is a program in which 45 percent of the youth are ex-offenders, but they are treated as any construction workers would be on the job. "The AND concept is to create a work environment similar to that of a construction company," Chan says. "Each crew is responsible for implementing their own project. A supervisor and designer are assigned to each project. The quality of work must be comparable to that of a private contractor. Project deadlines must be met and time efficiency is stressed." Of the 60 participants in the program during the last three years only six have dropped out.[18]

- Fourth, in hands-on training, particularly, there has to be a relatively low supervisor-to-trainee ratio. Supervisors say that with more than six trainees to a supervisor the program tends to deteriorate. When possible, supervisors and trainers should have recent work experience. Asian Neighborhood Design works well with youth because its staff has been involved for more than six years in community improvement projects. The staff is composed of professionals: they are not "trainers," but they are draftsmen, carpenters and welders.

- Fifth, with the development of private industry councils as a central planning mechanism, representatives of private industry and the prime sponsor must work closely to provide the basic direction and set the standards for work competency in training. In many cities, the CETA prime sponsors and PIC have either been working in isolation from each other or have engaged in a kind of guerrilla warfare, undermining each other's efforts.

When, in fact, representatives of industry and unions do choose to participate actively, strong programs often develop. In Philadelphia, dozens of companies have promised to use their facilities at night to train participants. In Oakland, the Kaiser Corporation has been centrally involved in the Success on the Move program, both in training and securing jobs. The United Parcel Service detaches executives from its offices around the country to work for two-to-three-month periods in the Oakland Youth Work program. In Hartford, local businessmen were active in planning and running a successful work experience program for in-school youth. In Denver, representatives of the AFL-CIO have directed and implemented OJT and upgraded efforts in meatcutting and carpentry jobs.

- Sixth, youth must perceive that they are being trained for jobs in the

mainstream of the workworld. "Forget silk screening, forget arts and crafts," says Charles Currey, an executive with Quaker Oats in Chicago and chairman of the state manpower and training council. "The kids have to know they're being trained for work lots of white folks do. Otherwise the training is make-believe."

● The last element of training concerns the critical dimension of problem-solving in the workplace, how to analyze a task, step by step, problem by problem. Few of the participants interviewed grasped the essentials of problem-solving and analytical thinking in school. Most are deficient in communication skills. Their inability to approach a work problem analytically puts them at an even greater disadvantage when they take a job.

Kenneth J. Jensen is branch manager in the customer engineering division of the Control Data Corporation in Minneapolis. His department is responsible for installing and servicing more than 1,200 computer terminals in the state of Minnesota. The youths who work in his division have been trained in CETA programs and in Job Corps and have gone through Control Data's most sophisticated and comprehensive in-house training. Yet he finds that no matter how much time they've spent learning about a computer, they have a hard time following through on all the steps involved in answering a service call.

"They don't ask the right question when a call comes in," says Jensen. "They bring out the wrong part. They don't get the information from the customer when they go out to the site. The job takes writing. It takes talking. But mostly, it takes thinking, reasoning. And most kids just don't have any experience thinking about what it takes to do the work. That part's missing from the training."

It shouldn't be. If training programs are serious about preparing youngsters for working, they must expose them to the analysis and problem-solving that will allow them to function on the job.

What can the private sector do?

Employers were asked: What could the private sector be reasonably expected to do to provide employment for youth? The short answer, in almost all cases, was: work with the schools.

A distinction is relevant here. A majority of *all* respondents believed that during this period of fiscal austerity whatever limited funds are available for training should go to out-of-school youth, which in their view was the group most sorely in need of job training. But employers, when asked which institutions they could cooperate with most harmoniously and productively, responded by saying the schools. It was not that employers disputed the contention that out-of-school youths were most in need; it was only that they preferred to collaborate with a relatively stable and established institution — the local school system.

In fact, this appears to be the favored strategy of most large employers. Richard de Lone, president of Public/Private Ventures, points out that in recent surveys of Fortune 500 companies, 75 percent of the respondents say they conduct programs with schools in their community.[19] These range from cor-

porations which adopt a high school, providing some work experience and part-time jobs for students, to a business which sends a speaker to a career day program.

If pressed about which high school students they would consider hiring, employers respond: the most enthusiastic and ambitious students, the ones with the top grades and the best attendance record, the ones who already have work experience. At times it sounded as if they were referring to the school valedictorian.

When the conversation turned to high school dropouts or even recent graduates, executives tended to shift the responsibility for hiring to other employers. Major corporations said that a job development strategy should be targeted at smaller businesses because they have a higher turnover and a greater need for relatively unskilled entry-level workers. (Some representatives of corporations suggested that program operators should make greater efforts to cultivate trade associations and other industrial and occupational associations whose members include smaller employers. Smaller companies said large corporations had the resources and staff to nurture and train youth.)

What's most striking is the unwillingness of large companies, whose representatives are members of private industry councils, to make any concerted effort to hire youth. This is not limited to PIC members interviewed. Public/Private Ventures found in a survey of PIC members, according to de Lone, that "most of the big businessmen who sit on PIC boards do not have their companies involved in training programs in any way, shape or form. The ones who do the hiring are almost always small businesses who are hard-pressed for semi-skilled workers or sometimes just for warm bodies."

In New York, Employment Commissioner Ronald Gault worked closely with the New York City Partnership, a coalition of employers, to plan this summer's youth employment program. Gault recalls:

> We saw this as an opportunity for the private sector to help close the gap as summer jobs' money was reduced. We went through an enormous amount of planning and preparation with work charts (and) time tables. When we got to it, we found that the participating employers were unwilling to bend their employment standards to meet the population. In fact, we found that many of them who had agreed at the outset to hire people 15 and younger insisted on hiring 18-year-old workers who had *experience in place*. Any who were younger, they weren't interested in."

It is against this rather unpromising background that some short-term measures to improve access to the job market and longer-range strategies should be considered.

Many employers and program operators believe that PIC members should be required to do more than participate in a general sense in planning training efforts. This does not necessarily mean that they have to pledge their own companies to hire — although that would certainly help — but it does mean that they will develop a concrete plan to solicit jobs from the business community. Large corporations have lots of clout. There is some evidence that active leadership by a major employer can go a long way in developing jobs.

Control Data's Advanced Career Employment and Training (ACET) program has trained and placed more than 300 graduates of Job Corps and CETA

programs. Some have gone to work for Control Data as custom engineers and computer operators; some were placed with other firms. Helen Jirack, a Control Data employee who worked as a job developer in the ACET program, says, "It made all the difference in the world that I could call a company and say I was representing Control Data. If I was working on the CETA staff I don't think I would have gotten a tenth of the commitments—and Minneapolis is a pretty advanced, enlightened community. Control Data opened the doors."

Specifically, major companies could help establish an early-warning employment system in metropolitan areas. Jobs for Youth relies for most of its jobs on previous employers who call the agency when an opening develops. A 1981 study by Interface,[21] a research firm in New York City, found that firms which employ between nine and 20 workers have the largest proportion of youth while companies with between 20 and 100 employees hire the largest aggregate number of youth. A network of these firms, cooperating with the Employment Service or a trade organization, might improve the prospects for job development.

Companies who hire youth during the summer or the school year can open doors in another sense. Some of the youths interviewed said that after their participation in the program there was no job for them, regardless of how well they had done at part-time jobs. They suggested that employers who cannot hire on a full-time basis could actively assist youths to find jobs with other companies. All they get now is a perfunctory letter of recommendation, if that much. It would not require a major effort for a personnel officer in a company to make a couple of calls for them.

The issue of subsidies is being discussed widely. Legislation now being considered in Congress provides for a six-week subsidized tryout period. In the Youth Incentive Entitlement Projects, which provided part-time and summer jobs to disadvantaged youth in high schools or to dropouts who returned to school, six-month subsidies were provided to employers. The employer response was mixed. Some employers kept the kids on after the subsidy expired; others let them go, and still others negotiated partial subsidies.

Eight of 10 employers in three cities where the entitlement program was operated said they kept youth on after the six months because of one program element: the involvement of a job counselor. "Some of the kids goofed up on drugs," says the manager of a Spanish-language radio station. "You had a 19-year-old girl who couldn't figure out what to do with her baby when she was working. As a boss I didn't have time to get involved in all that crap. The counselor made the difference. When the kid screwed up on the job, I could talk to the counselor about it and she'd go back to the kid. If the kid had some problems with what I was doing, the kid could talk to her. She was the bridge."

Public/Private Ventures is serving as an intermediary organization in two wage-subsidy programs in rural Wisconsin and Los Angeles. In both, the program provides support and services to the youth and to the employers. It is not an OJT strategy; rather, the employer becomes a kind of mentor to the youth with help from job counselors. A number of employers have volunteered to pay part of the salary after the first couple of months. Only one youth has been fired.

The employers interviewed as well as a number of program operators, job

developers and participants suggested that: (1) the proposed six-week subsidized tryout period be extended to eight to 12 weeks; (2) employers be required to pledge that the youth would be considered for a permanent job if he or she met the standards the employer set; (3) during this trial period the training program should provide counseling and social support, in effect acting as an intermediary between the employer or supervisor and the new employee.

V. YOUTH AND THE FUTURE

Strategies which embody these principles may improve the quality of training, improve the prospects for employing youth and give them a better shot at keeping their jobs. But no one believed that these changes would significantly reduce the level of structural unemployment, compounded by national recession and the loss of 870,000 public service jobs since 1980.

There are never enough training and enough jobs to meet the needs of disadvantaged youth in America. Eli Ginzberg puts the issue squarely: "The major problem is that we have never been able to link the training with jobs at the end of training. I don't see how in a civilized society you can say to people you're supposed to work and then not offer them the chance to work."

It is doubtful how many youngsters will take part in unpaid training when the training doesn't provide access to the labor market. "I don't think many kids will come to that party," says Jack Wuest, director of the alternative school network in Chicago.

A melancholy tone permeates many discussions of youth unemployment these days. People mistakenly look forward to five or 10 years from now when the youth population will decline. The overall youth population is declining, but the poor, minority youth population is not.

Other people await the end of the recession, ignoring the obstacles created by structural unemployment and racial discrimination. And some settle for a strategy providing "patch" jobs—"chump change," as one sociologist described it — to support kids until they become adults, as if turning 18 or 21 or 24 magically offers access to what was denied to them when they were 16.

Yet not everyone was resigned to waiting. Some of the people interviewed were considering during this transitional period broader strategies for confronting the unyielding problem of youth unemployment. They were asking, again, the question that has perplexed policymakers since the early 1960s: What policies will provide both training and jobs for youth?

There is, sadly, a lack of new ideas and approaches. And it is beyond the province of this report to consider such comprehensive policy initiatives as a year of voluntary national service for youth or the regeneration of public service employment, or the reconstruction of inner-city communities or the establishment of new national residential training programs for youth. However, one proposal evoked considerable interest and support among the people interviewed.

It concerns publicly-funded enterprises or private sector initiatives that receive tax incentives or low-interest government loans.

In St. Paul, Minnesota, the Office of Manpower Programs has received a $1 million grant from the McKnight Foundation for a youth training and employment effort tied to the development of the St. Paul Energy Park. The park, which relies on high technology and energy conservation, will contain both businesses and residential housing on a 300-acre site. The principal developer is the St. Paul Port Authority. The development of the park will create an estimated 4,000 jobs during the next three years.

Manpower Director Richard Thorpe will attempt to employ youth in the different phases of the park's development. In the first stages, he wants to put youth on landscaping and construction-related jobs. Later, after businesses open, he wants to place them in retail, service and maintenance positions. With the support of the Mayor and the Port Authority, he has secured a clause in all construction contracts that requires builders to set aside 20 percent of the jobs for trainees in the program.

The program will begin with a relatively brief basic education effort and the development of work attitudes. It will then progress to skills training. Once the trainees are on the job they will receive intensive counseling and peer support.

Training youth to work in a community which is being developed, Thorpe believes, allows youth to change interests and vocational direction as they grow up. "Three years from now the same kid who worked in landscaping when he laid the sewers may want to move into manufacturing or sales or into health services. We'll be there to help him do that. The important thing is that right from the start they've been part of the community life and growth."

Underlying this effort is Thorpe's belief, based on a decade as manpower director and as a consultant to the U. S. Department of Labor, that publicly-supported projects must have a manpower component. If the energy park project succeeds, he hopes to apply the same strategy to Urban Development Action Grants and Housing and Urban Development funds. "It's the Mayor's feeling and my feeling, that if we have a development effort going on here, it shouldn't be creating jobs for people in the suburbs."

Thorpe also points out that many private sector enterprises receive indirect public support through tax incentives, bonds and other inducements. "There's a strong feeling in St. Paul that anything that occurs here that's fostered by public monies should be part of our manpower development effort," he says.

In December 1979, the National Commission for Employment Policy recommended that the federal government include a provision in grant-in-aid programs and contracts that requires employers to consider hiring job-ready young men and women. This recommendation, which some unions and employers have opposed, has never been fully implemented, although local administrations in Denver, San Francisco and other cities are now trying to link public grants for development to jobs for disadvantaged youth. If this strategy were implemented as part of national policy, it could generate many jobs.

Of course, any investment in untrained, under-educated, unemployed and deeply troubled youth is risky. Many of the employers interviewed talked a lot about risk. For example, one Miami banker who was considering whether his bank should employ eight youngsters who had completed a CETA program said, "This is a business that requires security. You need employees who are

reliable, who take their work seriously, who feel a responsibility. These kids are risky."

His office, on the 23rd floor, overlooks the city. The port area, the downtown site where a new tourist and convention center was being constructed, and the marina where dozens of pleasure boats are docked lies to the south. To the north are the burned-out remains of Liberty City. "Of course," he said after a long pause, "not to hire them could also be risky."

VI. SUMMARY

This report has tried to respond to two questions: Which strategies and policies with regard to youth training and employment have been effective in the past and should be retained? Which policies should be modified or rejected? A summary of major findings, based on interviews with 283 people in 17 cities, follows.

Funding:

- A majority of respondents said that *during this period of retrenchment* scarce funds should go to youth who are out of school and out of work. To support this position, they argued that out-of-school youth are most in need of training and jobs; that the policy of setting aside 22 percent of training funds for local school systems has not resulted in a significant improvement in the level of cooperation between schools and the training system, and that in-school programs tended to favor the most promising of the disadvantaged students.
- If training funds continue to be provided to schools—while the overall level of funding is decreased—programs should serve *only* high school youths between the ages of 16 and 18 and out-of-school youths between the ages of 16 and 19.
- If funding is substantially increased in the future, respondents would favor programs for in-school and out-of-school youths between the ages of 14 and 21.
- The vast majority of the people interviewed believe that the minimum wage allowances for classroom training should be eliminated. However, they would provide supportive services, such as day care, car fare and assistance in finding part-time jobs, and special grants and loans for those without an income.
- Most practitioners believe that programs should be evaluated and funded on the basis of how many youths improved their educational status, were certified as employable or found unsubsidized employment, rather than on the single standard of the number of participants who found employment after

training. If educational achievement and employability were established as criteria for judging the effectiveness of programs, it would result in more comprehensive and extensive training efforts, practitioners say, which would be an advancement over the short-term interventions, which now prevail.

- In the view of program operators, learning specialists and representatives of community-based organizations, an important step toward improving the overall quality of training would be to establish a more comprehensive assessment and intake system. They also recommend that intake and testing centers should be situated in inner-city neighborhoods where minority youth have ready access to them. Educators and practitioners recognize that improving the quality of testing and intake would be a costly initiative.

Training and Job Placement:

- In recent years, several approaches to training and job placement have been developed. They were regarded by respondents as effective and worth preserving in the future. These included strict standards for attendance and achieving competencies; the simulation of a work environment which resembles the actual work place conditions and a low supervisor-to-trainee ratio in hands-on training. Program operators, practitioners and business representatives also urge that trainees be exposed in training to the elements of problem-solving in the workplace, the analysis of a task, step by step, problem by problem.

- Many of those interviewed supported some form of public service employment, which they regarded as a means of providing significant work experience for youth. They also believed that PSE had provided useful community services in some instances. But they expressed the view that PSE had little public and political support at present and doubted that it would be resuscitated soon. However, at some time in the future, they expected that a new national PSE program for youth and adults will emerge.

- Respondents were divided over what kind of training should be provided. Personnel officers and line supervisors in the private sector as well as participants tended to favor training that developed "marketable skills" and "technological literacy." These are qualities that they believe are essential if youths are to survive their break-in period on the job. However, executives and program operators emphasized basic education and attitude change. A majority of all the people interviewed said that a truly effective training program would include all of these elements. Some respondents recognized the need for a strategy which places youth in jobs as rapidly as possible, with little or no pre-employment training. But a majority supported a training approach which embodies all of the elements described above; they believe this more comprehensive effort is preferable, particularly for older youth.

- In the view of business representatives and practitioners, there must be closer cooperation in planning and job development between the training system and the private sector. Where collaboration does exist, effective programs have been operated. In the past, employers have preferred to work with local schools, rather than with the CETA system, but many of the people

interviewed believe that program operators and manpower directors should make a greater effort to involve members of private industry councils and representatives of leading employers in the training and employment process.

- Both employers and manpower officials say that one key element missing from many job development strategies is the presence of a job counselor who would act as an intermediary between youths who have been recently hired and management. At sites where a representative of the training system has acted as an intermediary, the job retention rate was improved significantly.
- There is wide support for a federally subsidized eight-to-twelve week tryout period after graduates of training programs are placed in jobs.

Future Strategies:

- Most of those interviewed agreed that there are not enough jobs in the private sector for youths who complete training. There was considerable support for a federal initiative which would require employers, who receive public assistance in the forms of low-interest loans and subsidies, to consider hiring job-ready young men and women. There was agreement that such a strategy could generate many jobs for youths certified as employable.

In summary, then, it might be asked: What kind of program* model emerges, based on these findings?

At least in the near future, a program which incorporated the findings reported in this paper would be directed toward out-of-school youth between the ages of 16 and 19. (If funding is increased, it would also include in-school youth participants as young as 14.) There would be no minimum wage allowances for classroom training, but supportive services would be provided. The program would have an improved and expanded intake and trainee assessment system.

This training effort would be evaluated on the basis of the participants' improved educational status and employability. However, for younger trainees, the emphasis may be on finding a job as quickly as possible; in such "patch-job" programs, the only relevant standard for evaluation may be the number of youths placed in jobs. However, most programs would provide a longer and more comprehensive training curriculum which included remedial education, when necessary, the development of marketable skills and technological literacy, attitude change and exposure to the problem-solving required for a job. Whether training would occur on the job or in the classroom, the new program model would simulate actual workplace conditions and establish strict standards for attendance and the development of competencies.

A program of the future, which embodied these findings, would require a close collaboration between the federally-supported training system and the private sector, particularly with regard to planning, development of curricula and job placement. While most job development would focus on the private sector, there would be, at some future point, a provision for public service employment for these youths who cannot find jobs in the private sector.

This program model would sustain its relationship with graduates after training. It would provide counseling for youth once they have taken a job and provide "intermediaries" who act as a link between employees and employer. An effort would be made to place youth in jobs where there is an opportunity for future training and advancement; marginal dead-end jobs would be avoided when possible.

Finally, in this program model, efforts to find employment for disadvantaged urban youths would be assisted by a federal policy which mandates that employers, who receive public subsidies, consider hiring successful graduates of youth training programs in their localities.

*Various elements in this model program are embodied in actual programs in San Francisco, Oakland, Chicago, Minneapolis, Denver and other cities. Elements of these programs are described in the text of this report.

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